

# Words on Wellness

## What Is a Plant-based Diet?



Plant-based diets are growing in popularity. Eating plant foods may protect from chronic diseases like heart disease, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes.

The goal of a plant-based diet is to consume more whole plant foods—like fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts and seeds, and whole grains—that will provide adequate nutrition overall.

Some people may choose to follow a vegetarian or vegan diet, while others may just eat one meatless meal a week. Eating a vegetarian diet means not eating flesh foods (meat, poultry, seafood, wild game) and may or may not exclude eggs or dairy products. A vegan diet excludes all flesh foods, eggs, and dairy products and may also exclude honey.

There are many plant-based foods that make eating a plant-based diet easy. Check out this list of [meat alternative products](http://www.todaydietitian.com/newarchives/1021p42.shtml), [www.todaydietitian.com/newarchives/1021p42.shtml](http://www.todaydietitian.com/newarchives/1021p42.shtml), on the market.

Be a smart shopper, though! Choose mostly whole and minimally processed food from a variety of food groups to have a well-balanced diet.

Sources: [Eat Right](http://www.eatrightpro.org), [www.eatrightpro.org](http://www.eatrightpro.org)  
[Eating Well](http://www.eatingwell.com), [www.eatingwell.com](http://www.eatingwell.com)

## *Slow Cooker Lentils*

Serving Size: 1/2 cup | Serves: 6

### Ingredients:

- 1 onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup dried lentils, rinsed
- 1 tablespoon homemade taco seasoning mix
- 3 cups water

### Directions:

1. Spray slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. Stir all ingredients together in the slow cooker.
2. Cook on high for 4 hours.
3. Use cooked lentils as the filling for lentil tacos, burrito bowls, or taco salads.

### Nutrition information per serving:

120 calories, 0g total fat, 0g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 0mg cholesterol, 15mg sodium, 23g total carbohydrate, 4g fiber, 2g sugar, 8g protein  
This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach's Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website. For more information, recipes, and videos, visit [spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu](http://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu)



## Busted: SNAP Myths

Having access to safe and nutritious foods is important in all stages of life. About 250,000 lowans do not have enough money to buy food! The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the largest hunger prevention program in the United States. Misconceptions are preventing older adults from using SNAP benefits.

- **“If I use SNAP, I’m taking it away from someone in greater need.”** All who are eligible and enroll in the program will receive assistance.
- **“I won’t be able to use SNAP where I live.”** SNAP is accepted in many places, including grocery stores, convenience stores, Schwan’s, farmers markets, and Meals on Wheels. Look for an EBT sign to determine if a vendor accepts SNAP.
- **“Applying is hard.”** There is help available during the application process. To see if you, a friend, or a family member qualifies for SNAP, call 1-855-944-3663 or visit [SNAP Eligibility](https://dhs.iowa.gov/food-assistance/eligibility), [dhs.iowa.gov/food-assistance/eligibility](https://dhs.iowa.gov/food-assistance/eligibility).



Learn more about  
SNAP eligibility

[go.iastate.edu/5B3LJO](https://go.iastate.edu/5B3LJO)

Source: [National Council on Aging](https://www.ncoa.org), [www.ncoa.org](https://www.ncoa.org)

## Fighting Higher Grocery Prices

Contributed by Suzanne Bartholomae

Inflation has hit America’s dinner table. Consumers are paying 11.9% more on groceries now than last year at this time. Supply chain shortages, bottlenecks in shipping and transportation, and a tight labor pool have all led to rising food prices.

Inflation means the buying power of your money is decreasing. To fight inflation, build an inflation fighter budget with [The Consumer Price Index Inflation Calculator](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator), [www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator).htm, or use this [cutting expenses tool](https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb_your-money-your-goals_cutting-expenses_tool.pdf), [files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb\\_your-money-your-goals\\_cutting-expenses\\_tool.pdf](https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb_your-money-your-goals_cutting-expenses_tool.pdf). Inflation won’t last forever; in the meantime, be proactive in your fight against rising food costs with these tips.

- Make a food budget using the budget tips from Spend Smart. Eat Smart., [spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/](https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/).
- Make a grocery list before you go to the store.
- Plan menus—preferably for an entire week, but even a few days is recommended.
- Compare prices between stores; changing grocers may save money.
- Use coupons, but only on products you already use.
- Shop sale items and substitute ingredients you find on sale.

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### AnswerLine

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### Spend Smart. Eat Smart.®

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### Human Sciences

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*If you or someone you know is skipping meals, going hungry, or choosing between food and medicine, call 1-855-944-3663 to apply for assistance today.*

*Call Iowa 2-1-1 or Iowa Lifelong Links, 1-866-468-7887, for additional resources.*

